

ESOHMS TRAINING DLA/SM's HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM



Introduction

- The following information is part of your Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Management System (ESOHMS).
- Remember that YOU are the key to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment.
- Go to ***IAmTheKey*** (***<http://www.strategicmaterials.dla.mil/iamthekey/Pages/default.aspx>***) Environmental, safety and occupational health policies, Click on hearing.



Purpose of This Training

This training is intended to:

- Inform you about Strategic Materials Hearing Conservation Program.
- Answer your questions and ensure that your work environment is safe.



Hearing Conservation Program - Essential Elements

- Noise Exposure - risks and effects
- Monitoring
- Audiometric Testing
- Hearing Protectors
- Recordkeeping
- Equipment Warning Signs



Noise Exposure

- One in 10 Americans suffers hearing loss that affects the ability to understand normal speech.
- Excessive noise is the most common cause of hearing loss, but disease or heredity can contribute.
- The combination of noise and prolonged exposure without hearing protection has caused many people to lose the ability to hear.



Noise Exposure

Hearing loss can be so gradual we often miss the warning signs. Temporary hearing loss is hard to detect without testing, but over time people may experience a permanent shift in their hearing threshold. In other words, people may think they have grown accustomed to loud noises when, in fact, they are experiencing damage from noise. Another symptom of impaired hearing is tinnitus or ringing in the ears.



Noise Exposure

Noise is measured in units called decibels (dB). The higher the decibels, the louder the noise:

- 20 - decibels soft whisper
- 30 - leaves rustling, very soft music
- 60 - normal speech, background music
- 85 - heavy machinery with soundproof cab
- 90 - lawnmower, shop tools
- 100 - heavy machinery without soundproof cab, motorcycles
- 115 - loud music, sand blasting
- 140 - jet engine, shotgun



Noise Exposure

- OSHA protects employees in the workplace by requiring employers to monitor for noise exposure, notify employees of a problem, establish and maintain a testing program, and provide training and hearing protection for all employees exposed to noise on the job.
- OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 requires employees exposed to an eight-hour, time-weighted average (TWA) of 85 decibels (dB) to wear hearing protection.



Noise Exposure

Hearing loss accumulates, and can continue even when an employee is at home. Away from the job, we can be exposed to noise from power tools, chain saws, lawnmowers, and concert music. All of these add to our daily decibel average.



Hearing Conservation Program

- Our program includes provisions for noise monitoring, audiometric testing, hearing protection, training and recordkeeping.
- It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to implement the provisions of the program
- It is the responsibility of all affected Strategic Materials employees to use hearing protection devices when required.



Monitoring

- All areas, operations and machinery within Strategic Materials controlled facilities shall be monitored using noise dosimeters for representative personal sampling, and sound level meters to identify levels greater than allowed by 29 CFR 1910.95 (85 dB TWA).
- Monitoring shall be repeated whenever a change increases noise exposure to the extent additional employees may be exposed to 85 dB TWA.



Monitoring

- Monitoring results will be used to identify individuals who are required to be placed in Strategic Materials Hearing Conservation Program.
- Employees exposed at or above the action level will be notified of their exposure.



Audiometric Testing

- All employees who could be exposed to hazardous noise levels in their employment with shall receive a baseline audiogram.
- All personnel exposed to noise above the action level shall receive annual audiograms as part of their annual medical examinations.
- If, in the opinion of the physician, a threshold shift has occurred, all follow-up testing required by 29 CFR 1910.95 (g)(8) will be conducted.



Hearing Protectors

- Employees exposed to noise above the action level shall be issued hearing protection.
- Hearing protection shall be designed to attenuate the employee's exposure to a level below 90 dB based on an 8-hour



TWA



Hearing Protectors - Earplugs

Two common forms of hearing protection:

- Earplugs, usually of soft rubber or foam, are worn in the outer ear canal and must fit snugly to block the entire canal.
- Improperly fitted, worn, or dirty earplugs may not seal and can irritate the ear. Disposable earplugs are often the best choice.
- Earplugs come in all shapes and sizes and can even be custom made.
- Earplugs work better for low-frequency noise



Hearing Protectors - Earmuffs

- Earmuffs are held in place by an adjustable band and fit snugly over the entire ear to form an air seal.
- Eyeglasses or long hair may interfere with the seal. Earmuffs must be kept clean and protected from damage to the cushion/seal.
- Earmuffs are better for higher frequencies.
- Used together with earplugs, they give 10 to 15 dB more protection than either type used alone. Therefore, employees should consider using earplugs and earmuffs together at noise levels that exceed 105 dB.



Hearing Protectors

- As with all personal protective equipment, hearing protection should be secondary to designing out a noise hazard and should be used only when engineering controls are not feasible.
- Hearing protection does not eliminate or reduce a hazard. It reduces the level of sound reaching the eardrum, so its failure means immediate exposure to harmful noise.



Recordkeeping

- Records of monitoring are to be maintained at the respective depot office for two years.
- Results of audiometric testing will be maintained in the employee's medical folder for the duration of their employment.
- All required records will be provided upon request to employees.



Equipment Warning Signs

All equipment and machinery producing hazardous noise levels shall be posted with appropriate warning signs that require the operator to wear hearing protection.



Some Final Words.....

- Remember that each of us is “the key” to successful implementation of Strategic Materials environmental, safety and occupational health policies and our ESOHMS.
- Remember that you play the largest role in protecting your hearing. Hearing protection is inexpensive and easy to use.
- This briefing should be supplemented by reading the Strategic Materials Hearing Conservation Program.



We Welcome Your Questions and Comments!

- Please forward any comments or questions on this presentation to your supervisor or Jason Boynton.
- Your supervisor, or Jason will obtain answers to your questions for you, and we will incorporate that information into future presentations, as part of the ESOHMS continual improvement goal.

